



## The Indian Association of Aruba installs the new board for 2006-2007

Men in business suits and women in glorious traditional Indian dress were gathered in the ballroom of the Marriott Resort and Stellaris Casino for the installation of the new board of the Indian Association of Aruba. The association is celebrating its silver anniversary, having been established twenty-five years ago.

Secretary of the association, Sunil Mirpuri, who will serve another year in this position, revealed that the Indian community in Aruba has existed for more than fifty years, and accounts for five percent of the Aruban population. The association consists of many well-respected merchants that have contributed to not only the Indian community financially and through activism, but the Aruban community as well.

The new board for 2006-2007 consists of Gopal Bhatia, of the Gold Palace, replacing K.P. Dodia as President, Kamlesh Alwani, of Shivas is from the previous board and serving again in his position as Vice-President, as is Sunil Mirpuri, Kings Jewelers serving as Secretary. Narish Melwani of Nobel Jewelers is replacing Raju Melwani as Co-Secretary, and Gopal Sawilani of Lucky Stores and Naresh Kanal from Super Shopping are repeating their terms as Treasurer and Co-Treasurer, respectively.

During the ceremonies, the host for the evening, Nikhil Varde of Nobel Jewelers recounted the history of the community in Aruba since the arrival of the first East Indian immigrant in 1926. Harish Daryanani, co-founder of the association officiated over the task of installing the new board.

Incoming president Gopal Bahtia addressed the gathering and presented the association's agenda for the coming year. Foremost on the agenda was a desire to be consulted by the Aruban government, as are a number of NGO entities, when they are considering economic reform. As a large and well-respected part of the retail community on Aruba, they feel it would be advisable and beneficent for legislators to call upon their experience and expertise. Another very important item on the agenda is the construction of an Indian temple and community center.

This elegant evening to install the new board is a welcome event by the wives of the Indian Association members as it provides the opportunity for them to wear traditional garb that they have specially made in India. The women were resplendent in their saris, consisting of draped cloth, or coordinated tunics and pants called churidhar and kameez, which are accessorized with matching shawls called dupatta. Though this style of dress is as old as Indian culture, the ladies reveal they do go through their own fashion changes, as colors and particular materials become popular.

THE NEWS congratulates the new board on their election and wishes them success, and the Indian Association of Aruba on their silver anniversary celebration.